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SUBJECT: CODEL TIERNEY'S JULY 3 MEETING WITH FOREIGN
MINISTER MAMMADYAROV

REF: BAKU 836

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES DONALD LU PER REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

¶11. (C) SUMMARY: In a relaxed July 3 meeting with Representative John Tierney, Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov said he recognized the importance of improving Azerbaijan's image in the U.S. Congress and, as President Aliyev did in an earlier meeting with the CODEL, requested additional visits by other U.S. congressmen. On the Nagorno Karabakh (NK) conflict, Mammadyarov said that the Armenian government needs to understand that the current situation cannot go on forever and that maintaining good relations with its neighbors was important. Mammadyarov was optimistic about resolving the conflict in the long-term, adding that Armenia "cannot take the land and run." Mammadyarov told Tierney that democratic development in Azerbaijan was a long-term process that cannot be rushed. Stating that Azerbaijan's security depends on the United States, Mammadyarov said that Russia's Gabala proposal was good for Azerbaijan as it put the country "on the map." Mammadyarov told Tierney that it is important for the GOAJ that Russia and the U.S. work together, adding that cooperation at Gabala would be Azerbaijan's contribution to non-proliferation issues. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (C) Congressman John Tierney, accompanied by the Ambassador, met with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov July 3 and discussed U.S.-Azerbaijan relations, relations with Armenia, NK deliberations, and regional issues. Foreign Minister Mammadyarov welcomed Congressman Tierney's visit to Azerbaijan and recognized the importance of improving Azerbaijan's image in the U.S. Congress. Mammadyarov stressed the importance of Tierney's visit to Baku and requested additional visits by other U.S. Congressmen to Azerbaijan.

U.S.-AZERBAIJAN RELATIONS

¶13. (C) Tierney acknowledged that his trip had been educational and that there is a lack of knowledge about Azerbaijan in Congress. Tierney highlighted that the U.S. is a friend of both Azerbaijan and Armenia, adding that these relationships are not mutually exclusive. Both Mammadyarov and Tierney agreed that U.S.-Azerbaijan relations were moving in the right direction, and that resolution of the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict was not impossible.

AZERBAIJAN-ARMENIA RELATIONS

¶ 14. (C) Mammadyarov said that the Armenian government needs to understand that the current situation cannot go on forever and that maintaining good relations with its neighbors was important. Regarding the NK peace discussions, Mammadyarov said that he and his Armenian counterpart have an understanding, but that the issue remains difficult and unpredictable. While the NK peace process was an "educational process" to bridge differences, Mammadyarov stated that he was optimistic in the long-term, adding that Armenia "cannot take the land and run." Armenia, said Mammadyarov, needs to "be part of the team." Mammadyarov was critical of the Armenian Diaspora, saying that its members did not know Armenia nor realize that it is an independent state.

¶ 15. (C) Describing the NK talks as going "nowhere," Mammadyarov called Armenia's position on NK and the occupied territories "old think" and said that the world had changed and the Government of Armenia had not yet realized it. The sooner Armenia recognizes this shift, the better, said Mammadyarov. He compared Armenia to Russian Kaliningrad, a southern Russian military and political stronghold.

¶ 16. (C) Mammadyarov briefed Tierney on the recent exchange of intellectuals from Azerbaijan and Armenia (ref a). He said that the people of both countries appear ready for peace but there are still many sensitive political issues that need to be resolved. Mammadyarov wondered aloud to Tierney how the next president of Armenia, possibly the former Minister of Defense, will view the dispute: like a general or a politician? Mammadyarov hinted that Azerbaijan, if faced

BAKU 00000858 002 OF 002

with no other options, would consider military action to take back NK and the occupied territories.

¶ 17. (C) As President Aliyev also described to Tierney (septel), Mammadyarov highlighted Armenia's close relationship with Iran and Russia. He said that Armenia receives its natural gas supplies from Iran and that Russian energy giant Gazprom controls most of Armenia's pipeline network. He added that Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan were all looking for "independence" from Russia. Gazprom and developing separate pipelines to the West. Azerbaijan's long-term vision, according to Mammadyarov, is to pursue deeper EU and Euro-Atlantic ties.

DEMOCRACY

¶ 18. (C) Mammadyarov told Tierney that democratic development in Azerbaijan was a "process" and the GOAJ cannot "do it quickly." He said that the GOAJ is trying to change the population's mentality and culture, both sensitive issues. He said that the GOAJ is making huge investments in education reform, moving towards international and European educational standards. The GOAJ also faces many challenges as it moves to modernize and upgrade its schools, including finding teachers that can teach with computers and use information technology. Hiring qualified teachers is a challenge for the GOAJ, according to Mammadyarov.

ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

¶ 19. (C) Mammadyarov said that successful management of the country's energy resources is not an easy task, a situation that is comparable to other energy rich countries. Mammadyarov admitted that some within the GOAJ want to spend the money quickly, disregarding the macroeconomic dangers. He stated that he is working with the Ministers of Finance and Economic Development, whom he characterized as being from the same "fraternity," to utilize the country's energy revenues wisely. Mammadyarov said that Azerbaijan needs to

use its "geographic advantage" to develop its non-energy sector. He told Tierney that Azerbaijan wants to be an energy transit country and transportation hub for the Caspian.

GABALA AND SECURITY

¶10. (C) Mammadyarov said that Azerbaijan's security depends on the United States and the U.S.-Russia dialogue, referring to missile defense and the Gabala radar station. He said that the announcement was good for Azerbaijan as it put the country "on the map." He noted that the current discussions between the U.S. and Russia were the first instance of cooperation between the two countries in the "near abroad," referring to Russia's definition of former Soviet republics. Mammadyarov told Tierney that it is important for the GOAJ that Russia and the U.S. work together, adding that cooperation at Gabala would be Azerbaijan's contribution to non-proliferation issues. Mammadyarov said that Iran is working hard in Moscow to defeat the proposal for U.S.-Russia Gabala station cooperation.

¶11. (U) CODEL Tierney did not have an opportunity to clear this message.

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